



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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Rituals

St. Luke's Hospice

484-526-2499

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If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at 484-526-2499.

“I envy my Jewish friends the ritual of saying Kaddish - a ritual that seems perfectly conceived, with its built-in support group and its ceremonious designation of time each day devoted to remembering the lost person”

- Meghan O'Rourke

We humans are creatures of habit. We like things predictable and orderly, and want to know what to expect. When we experience a death, even if we are expectant of the passing, we are reminded that we are not in control. This lack of control can be disconcerting; grief is a time of disarray and mess, and we find ourselves wanting a certain order to an existence that otherwise might be full of confusion and chaos. One way we can achieve some level of control and organization is through the use of rituals, or actions done in purposeful ways that symbolize something much more meaningful. When we are grieving and experiencing the ‘mess’ of grief, rituals help us become grounded; they help us overcome grief by counteracting the turbulence and chaos that follows loss. In our culture, there are few rituals for grieving people outside of funeral or memorial services. These are necessary and helpful, but grieving people need more than a couple of rituals to help calm the chaos the death of a loved one can bring.

Researchers Michael I. Norton and Francesca Gino at Harvard Business School studied the importance of rituals in helping the bereaved integrate their loss. They found that some mourners who overcame feelings of grief more quickly all had something very important in common: following the loss, they performed rituals, particularly private rituals that honored the relationship they shared with their deceased loved one. The distinction between private and public rituals is important to note; they found that when grieving individuals created private rituals, as opposed to public rituals of funerals or memorial services, the grieving individual reported feeling a connection to the memory of their deceased loved one in a deep and powerful way. The researchers also found that after people did a ritual or wrote about doing one, they were more likely to report thinking that “things were in check” and less likely to feel “helpless,” “powerless,” and “out of control.”

So, the question becomes, how do we create private rituals? The answer is as individual to you as it is to your relationship with the deceased, as it is to your personality, and as it is to many other factors that are unique to you. While rituals can vary widely, the underlying principle of restoring a sense of control is usually the same. Simple rituals can be meaningful and healing, and they help us regain our footing when our world becomes a little shaky. Rituals can be as simple as speaking a phrase each morning before you begin your day, but can truly be any habitual action you choose, such as visiting a lost loved one's favorite store, listening to a song that they enjoyed, or continuing to celebrate or acknowledge the loved one's birthday. I encourage you to consider ways in which you can honor your loved one through the use of rituals, and if you are unsure of where to start, some suggestions are waiting for you on the next page...

-Mindy

Resources

Ideas for Creating Rituals

Creating rituals to remember your loved one allows you to work through grief in a safe and constructive way. Here are some ideas to get you started on creating your own private rituals in honor of your loved one:

1. Light a candle in your loved one's honor, particularly at a certain time of day or week
2. Say a prayer
3. Make space in your home to display items of your loved one
4. Make a memory box or photo album and fill it with photographs, letters, notes or other significant memorabilia from your life together
5. Listen to your loved one's favorite music
6. Make a meal in memory of your loved one and share it with family or friends
7. Give to charity in your loved ones name. Make the same donation each year.
8. Go somewhere you feel close to your loved one; visit your loved one's gravesite, or another place where you feel close to him/her.
9. Tell stories
10. Write your stories
11. Have a moment of silence at a family gathering
12. Plant a flower or a tree in your loved one's memory
13. Sit in stillness and remember
14. Watch your loved one's favorite movie
15. Carry a small token that reminds you of your loved one that you can take out and hold when you feel the need
16. Create a work of art in your loved one's memory
17. Recite a poem, prayer or inspirational quote
18. Get out in nature - go for a walk, take a hike, go to the beach, ride a bike, sit on a patio
19. Celebrate your loved one's birthday
20. Release balloons or Chinese lanterns



"It's different when the person you love dies. There's an awful finality to death. But it is final. The end. And there's the funeral, family gatherings, grieving, all of those necessary rituals. And they help, believe me. When the object of your love just disappears, there's no way to deal with the grief and pain."

Barbara Taylor Bradford

Grief and Loss Support Group

Our 6 week Grief and Loss Support Group starts in August 2016. This group is for adults grieving the loss of someone significant in their lives and provides an opportunity to come together with others who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The group guides participants in understanding the uniqueness of their grief. This group provides support, resources and education on the healing process. The group will meet on Wednesdays from August 17, 2016 through September 21, 2016 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm at St. Luke's Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). **Registration is required.** Suzann.Ditzel@sluhn.org or call (484) 526-2514



Open /Drop-in Support Groups

We offer 3 Open Groups to help meet the ongoing needs of bereaved individuals. Open Groups are supportive in nature and new members are welcome to join at any time. Our three groups meet:

First Monday of every month from 4:00-5:00 pm at St. Luke's Hospital, Anderson Campus, 1600 St. Luke's Boulevard, Easton, PA 18045. Meeting room will be Medical Office Building, Conference Room Side A, 1700 St. Luke's Blvd. The next group will be **Monday, August 1, 2016**

First Wednesday of every month, from 7:00-8:00 pm at St. Luke's Hospital, Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA. We will meet in the Cafeteria Conference Room. The next group will be **Wednesday, August 3, 2016.**

First Friday of each month from 10:00-11:00 am at St. Luke's Hospice House (2455 Black River Road, Bethlehem.). Our next meeting will be on **Friday, August 5, 2016.**

Memoir Writing Workshop

Most of us don't write about those we love while they are alive – unless we happen to keep a diary. After we lose someone, we may want to use writing as a way to cope with our loss. We may want to chronicle family stories or capture the unique way someone spoke or dressed. We may want to try writing as a way to document our life shared with our loved one. This guided workshop will assist you in turning your memories into manuscripts. Please join us for a 6-week workshop on Monday evenings, **September 26, 2016 through October 31, 2016 from 6:00-8:00 pm.** We will meet at the Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). Because of the nature of this workshop, we ask that participants be at least six months beyond the date of their loss. **Registration is required.** Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org or call (484) 526-2314



Newly Bereaved Workshop

This one-time workshop is for those who have a lost a loved one within the past 1-3 months and will provide education on the first few weeks and months of grief following a death. We will cover understanding common grief reactions, coping strategies, self-care throughout the grief process and beyond, and the uniqueness of your grief experience. These workshops will be offered on a bi-monthly basis. We will be meet on Wednesday, September 21, 2016 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm The Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). **Registration is required.** Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org or 484-526-2314.

"Ritual cuts through and operates on everything besides the 'head' level."

Aiden Kelly

Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call the Bereavement Office at (484) 526-2499 for referrals to other services.

Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley is a local non-profit organization providing emotional and social support to family members and caregivers. They offer support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes in their Allentown, PA office. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email info@cancersupportglv.org to register or for more information.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2nd Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 610-837-7924.

TCF of Quakertown meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2nd Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 215-536-0173.

TCF of Easton meets the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992 www.givinggriefavoice.com

Free Spirits is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other--and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley is planning to hold monthly social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, please call Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057, email soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com, or follow on Facebook at Soaring Spirits International Group Lehigh Valley.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center offers an Open Group on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Registration is required, contact Deb at (610) 347-9988 or deb@bradburysullivancenter.org. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101. There is no charge for the group.

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit www.griefshare.org.

St. Francis Retreat House holds monthly grief support groups on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 9:30-11:00 am. Located at 3918 Chipman Avenue, Easton PA. Please call 610-515-9028 for more information.

GRASP - For families who have experienced a death due to substance use. Group meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm at 1st Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Room 118. Please register with Nancy Howe (484) 788-9440

Stepping Stones for Adolescents is a group for teens ages 11-16 that meets at Lehigh Valley Hospice for teen peer support. Call (610)969-0330 for more information.

VNA/Hospice of Monroe County offers a support group the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at noon. Call 570-421-5390 for more information.

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit www.dhospice.com or call 215-345-2838.

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers grief support services in the form of counseling, support groups, and workshops for adults and children, as well as a lunch club for women. For information, please call 610-969-0330.